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ABSTRACT

In September 1972 approximately 1,325 students were accepted for admission to Florida A and M University, but 32 percent failed to enroll. When the noshows were grouped according to certain categories of status as of October 1972, those in college had the highest test scores; those in the Armed Forces had the next best scores; those housekeeping had the third best scores; and those working had the lowest group scores. Additionally, there was a monotonic relationship between achievement, as measured by standardized tests, and the extent to which the applicants planned to migrate for educational purposes. The noshows farthest away had the highest group scores and those nearest the university had the lowest scores. Some of the reasons why the noshows chose the colleges they entered were: availability of part-time work, college located near home, awarded aid or scholarship, high academic standards of undergraduate program, and personal preference. (Author)

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FLORIDA AGRICULTURAL AND MECHANICAL UNIVERSITY
Tallahassee, Florida

WHY THEY DID NOT ENROLL

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Test Service Bureau

A. A. Abraham, Director

December 1974

Introduction

Traditionally educators have made a continuous and serious effort to improve the school curricula. To do this they usually have sought input from those who previously had been consumers of their services. A primary source of this input has been followup studies from graduates. A secondary source has been input from dropouts. More recently a third-order source has been input from "noshows," those accepted but who fail to enroll.

Most institutions tend to place inordinate emphasis upon evaluation from graduates. For obvious reasons, comparatively, such judgments are easier to obtain than those from dropouts and noshows, the latter being the hardest of all to solicit. The responses from graduates are also likely to be more favorable to and corroborative of the institution's own preceptions of itself than those from the other two samples. Thus, the responses from graduates are likely to be less valuable and useful in the long run. In importance, the results from dropouts and noshows would hold in the same relative ways as those for graduates and dropouts. Consequently, input from noshows could be the most meaningful of all feedback for program development. This study dealt with the guidance input from the 1972 freshman noshows.

What Was Done

After screening for admission, about 1,325 freshman applicants were certified to register in the University September 1972. Of this number, 419 or 32 percent failed to enroll. They became the subjects of this study.

The subjects were sent a questionnaire calling for typical biographical data. Each respondee was also asked to indicate the broad area of his educational or vocational activity as of October 1972. Additionally, respondees were requested to answer a few specific questions in one of the five areas checked: (1) attending college, (2) working, (3) serving in Armed Forces, (4) keeping house, and (5) vocational or technical school.

It was assumed that most of the noshows had gone away to college but would be at home for Christmas. Therefore, each one was mailed a short (Please Forward) letter, including a questionnaire and a franked envelope for returning the questionnaire. The letters were dropped in the campus post office about December 7, 1972, with the hope they would be delivered to the subjects just before they arrived at home for the holidays.

No returns had been received by the beginning of the second quarter in January 1973. The problem was brought to the attention of the campus postmaster. It was learned, due to malfunctioning of the stamp canceling machine that the

letters had never been mailed. However, they were mailed later. But the damage to the rate of returns obviously was irreparable. Despite this unfortunate incident and without a follow up, 89 or 21 percent of the 419 questionnaires were returned by March 31, 1973. The results were recorded and analyzed for their guidance implications.

Findings

The cutoff score on the 12th grade battery for regular admission to the University is 300 or its equivalences on other national tests. All other applicants enter in the special admission's category. Out-of-state subjects usually take The American College Test (ACT) or Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT by the College Entrance Examination Board). Scores for these two batteries are normally converted to comparable scores on the Florida battery for guidance, counseling, placement and research purposes. Insight into the potentialities of the noshows may be gleaned from the distributions for the Florida, out-of-state and combined samples as disclosed in Table 1.

Table 1. Distribution of 1972 Noshow Freshmen by Entrance Scores, Based on Residence

Scores	Florida		Out of State		Total	
	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
450 - 499						
400 - 449	1	2			1	1
350 - 399	2	4	3	8	5	6
300 - 349	1	2	6	16	7	8
250 - 299	2	4	6	16	8	10
200 - 249	4	10	8	21	12	14
150 - 199	6	13	6	16	12	14
100 - 149	13	29	2	5	15	18
50 - 99	14	31	6	16	20	24
0 - 49	2	4	1	2	3	5
Total	45	99	38	100	83	100
Mean	145		218		181	
Mode	75		225		75	

As may be seen in Table 1, there were 45 Florida and 38 out-of-state or a total of 83 noshows in the study. The Florida sample had a mean of 145 on the battery; the out-of-staters, a mean of 218; and the mean for the combined groups was 181. The mean is the best and most accurate statistical description of the average performance or achievement of a group.

The mode is another insightful measure of centrality. It indicates where the scores in a distribution tend to pile up and is the best statistical description of the most typical subject in a sample. In this study, the Florida subjects had a mode of about 75. The out-of-state noshows had a mode of about 225. The mode for the combined samples was roughly 75.

How did the entrance battery scores for the Florida and out-of-state noshows compare with the scores for their matchees who did enter the University? Decile distributions for the out-of-state and Florida registrants are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Distribution of 1972 Freshman Registrants, Based on Residence

Scores	Florida		Out-of-state		Total	
	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
450 - 499			1		1	
400 - 449	5		2	1	7	1
350 - 399	19	3	7	4	26	4
300 - 349	17	3	10	6	27	4
250 - 299	44	9	19	12	63	9
200 - 249	76	13	38	24	114	15
150 - 199	112	19	34	21	146	20
100 - 149	125	22	25	16	150	20
50 - 99	137	24	25	16	162	22
0 - 49	40	7	-	-	40	5
Total	575	100	161	100	736	100
Mean	158		193		167	
Mode	75		225		75	

It may be observed in Table 2 that the mean battery score for the Florida registrants was 158. It was 198 for the out-of-state registrants. The means are not significantly different. However, the modes of roughly 75 for the Floridians and 225 for the out-of-staters do indicate some significant differences between the typical Floridian and the typical out-of-stater.

Graduation from high school often produces very critical crises in the lives of most youngsters. It is usually at this point in time when they must make decisions which are likely to determine their personal, social, educational and vocational roles for the remainder of their lives. Scores on the entrance battery were not available for four of the subjects who were in college and two of those who were housekeeping as of October 1972. The remaining 83 noshows were engaged in the post-secondary roles shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Distribution of Noshows, Based on What They Were Doing As of October 1, 1972

Status	Number	Mean battery	No scores
In College	48	218	4
Armed Forces	4	179	-
Housekeeping	7	123	2
Working (full or part time)	24	120	-
Vocational or Technical School	-	-	-
Summary	83	160	6

According to Table 3, based on cognitive styles, the self-selecting principle is clearly apparent in the cluster of roles the sample was playing when surveyed. The composit battery score for the 48 targetees in college was 218. It was 179 for those in the Armed Forces and 120 for the 24 subjects working full- or part-time. It is unfortunate at least some of the last group had not seen fit to enroll in vocational or technical schools, many of which operate in the evening.

The above discussion concerned the influence of the principle of self-selection on post-secondary roles, usually greatly influenced by other less objective factors. Thus, the noshows were asked to indicate why they had chosen the colleges which they were attending. They were permitted to make multiple responses to the items. But it was decided arbitrarily to include only those reasons indicated by ten or more subjects. The results may be seen in Table 4.

Table 4. Distribution of 1972-73 Noshows According to Reasons for Choosing Colleges Entered

Number	Reasons	Total
1.	Will enter professional school here	10
2.	Personal perference	17
3.	Gained early admission	13
4.	High prestige of school	12
5.	Parents or other relatives	14
6.	High Academic standards of undergraduate program	14
7.	College located near home	28
8.	Awarded loan	10
9.	Awarded grant	17
10.	Awarded scholarship	29
11.	Availability of part-time work	20

It is apparent from the responses in Table 4 that most of the subjects had chosen their colleges for financial or economic reasons as indicated by the 76 persons responding to items 8, 9, 10 and 11. Closely associated with these reasons is item No. 7, "College located near home," 28 persons. Some of the other reasons for their choices were: "Wrote your school but never received an answer." "My mother did not have money for out-of-state fees." "FAMU did not answer me soon enough." "I wanted to pick up good study habits at a junior college first then may be a four year

college later. From my understanding, junior college prepares you for the big universities. It was cheaper if I went to a junior college first also." "Late notification of my acceptance to FAMU." "No financial aid from FAMU." "Had only enough money to go to A&M one term."

Having talked about why the targetees chose the colleges they did, a logical question was where are those colleges? Of the 48 targetees in college as of October 1972, 12 were in junior colleges. Nine of these junior colleges are in Florida. Of the 36 in four-year institutions, four were in other universities in Florida. The other 32 were out-of-state. In general, the noshows in school had entered institutions in one of the six South Atlantic or one of the three East South Central states. No more than two noshows were found in any one institution.

In America the tendency to migrate out of state for educational purposes has been an outstanding characteristic among college students. However, the tendency is now being curbed by such practices as quotas, higher admission's requirements for non-indigenous applicants and extremely excessive out-of-state fees. But the tendency is still conspicuous. What, then, were the geographical origins of noshows in this study? The information needed to answer this question was available for some of the noshows and is analyzed, along with entrance battery scores, in Table 5.

Table 5. Distribution of 1972 Noshow Freshman Applicants By Entrance Scores, Based on Standard Geographical Divisions

Geo. Division	Number	Mean battery
Pacific	2	275
West S. Central	4	235
New England	15	235
South Atlantic	46	208
East N. Central	2	093
East S. Central	2	093
West N. Central	-	-
Summary	71	185

As may be seen in Table 5, there were only 71 subjects providing this information. Even so, certain principles of relationship seep through. Through the years, there has been a strong and monotonic relationship between achievement, as measured by standardized tests, and the extent of migration for educational purposes. Low-scoring students are more likely to attend a nearby college; while higher-scoring students are more likely to migrate to another community in the state or to another state. The higher the achievement, the farther the migration in general.[1]

[1]R. H. Fenske, C. S. Scott and J. F. Carmody, College Student Migration (ACT Research Report). No. 54, December 1972, p. 7.

Although four of the subgroups in Table 5, are rather small, the relationship between test scores and intended migration is apparent. The applicants from some of the New England, West South Central, and Pacific States typically, possessed the highest test scores. Those from Florida and states nearer to Florida, generally, possessed lower scores. In 1963, we conducted a follow-up study of a group of talented black high school seniors in Florida and also found monotonic relations between test battery scores and the extent of migration for educational purposes.[2]

Summary and Conclusions

This was a follow-up study of freshman applicants who applied for admission to Florida A & M University in September 1972, were accepted, but who did not enter that quarter. Roughly 1,325 subjects were accepted. Of this number, 419 or 32 percent failed to enroll and became the sample for this study. The discrepancy between the above totals and those in Tables 1 and 2 are due to several reasons. Test scores were unavailable for some subjects. Others entered under special conditions, etc.

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[2]A. A. Abraham, "The 139: Their Origin, Where They Went and Why," Test Service Bureau, Florida A & M University, June 1, 1963, (mimeograph), 14 pp.

The targetees were asked to respond to a questionnaire seeking information in five areas: (1) attending college, (2) working, (3) serving in the Armed Forces, (4) keeping house, and (5) vocational or technical school. The responses were analyzed for their guidance implications.

There were about 550 black high school seniors in Florida who made 300 or more on the 12th grade battery in October 1971. Of that number, 45 or eight percent applied to and were accepted for admission to FAMU in September 1972. However, only 41 or seven percent registered.

The mean entrance score for all Florida registrants was 158. The mode was 75. The loss of the better prepared Florida high school seniors was somewhat offset by the entrance of better prepared out-of-state applicants, whose mean was 198 and mode, 225. However, being better prepared to compete in the academic marketplaces generally could mean that out-of-staters will win more academic honors and scholarships based on achievement than will Floridians.

Another aspect of the phenomenon of student migration is that it taxes the University's capacity to provide financial aid to students. As indicated in the study, a very large percentage of the typical Florida students entering FAMU is likely to need considerable financial aid. And although good

out-of-state students may be in better financial condition, the need to maintain and even raise standards while diversifying the student body, is likely to force the University to make excessive financial aid offers to better out-of-staters. One solution to this dilemma is to go for more of the better high school seniors in Florida despite their apparently unconscious "have-good-academic-credentials-will-travel" attitude.

In all probability, more than 600 black seniors made at least 300 on the battery during the September-October 1974 administration and will be eligible for unrestricted admission to the University in 1975. At least for sentimental reasons, many of these prospects should be attracted to Florida A & M University by hard sell tactics. This would enable the University to cut down on the large amount of money it is likely to have to invest in out-of-state fee waivers for good students. Enormous fee waivers for large numbers of out-of-state students sharply limit the amount of financial aid available to native students - above average, average, or below average - in the long run. For example, it costs the typical Florida freshman $195.00 for tuition per quarter, and the out-of-stater $555.00.

Finally, when grouped according to cognitive styles, it appears that those state or out-of-state applicants who apply for admission to FAMU, are accepted but fail to register - like those who do register - are highly similar to the typical American student models in their educational choices, migratory tendencies, vocational pursuits, personal needs and aspirations.

THE END